W-4 Instructions

The W-4 determines how much federal and state taxes will be withheld from your pay.

W-4 Instructions:

To view and/or change your W-4, log on to the employee portal at my.cu.edu. Go to: CU Resources tab> Payroll and Compensation> W-4. If you are an active employee, but do not have the CU Resources Tab, please call the IT Help Desk on your campus.

A Two-Factor Authentication screen will pop up for security purposes.

For help with the Two-Factor Authentication, click here: Two-Factor Authentication Instructions

Enter the number of allowances 0-99 and marital status (single or married) you wish to claim for tax withholding purposes. If you are married, but wish to have taxes withheld at the higher, single rate, click the corresponding box next to marital status. If you want to have additional Federal taxes withheld enter the additional amount. This amount will be added to the calculated federal withholding. When your selections are complete select Submit.

Failure to submit a W-4 will result in the default rate single and 0 withholdings per IRS guidelines. Changes must be saved the day before payroll is processed in order to affect your next paycheck.

Exempt Status Guidelines:

The IRS has strict regulations for claiming exempt. Exempt status means the employee is not subject to federal and state income tax withholding. Please refer to the IRS website or consult your tax consultant to determine if you are eligible to claim Exempt on your W-4.

If the Exempt box is checked on the W-4 no federal or state taxes will be withheld from your paycheck. The exemption expires mid-February each year. You must claim Exempt before this time to stay Exempt for the rest of the year. The University of Colorado is not responsible for those who claim Exempt on their W-4 who are ineligible to do so and who may end up owing money to the IRS.

International Employees:

International employees are subject to special rules and should meet with an international tax specialist to complete Form W-4. Please schedule an appointment with an international tax specialist via the online appointment scheduling system.

General Information on your W-4:

The higher number of allowances you claim on your W-4, the less income tax will be withheld. You will have the most tax withheld if you claim single and zero allowances. View your pay advice on the employee portal CU Resources tab> Payroll and Compensation> Pay Advice to see your current and year-to-date federal and state tax withholdings. A tax advisor or the IRS Withholding Calculator can help you to determine if enough taxes are being withheld from your paycheck.
To help determine the correct number of allowances, complete the eight-line worksheet * and/or the IRS Tax Withholding Calculator below.

Helpful IRS tools:

- IRS Tax Withholding Calculator
- W-4 Worksheet and Form in English  *
- W-4 Worksheet and Form in Spanish  *
- Publication 505 Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax

Colorado State Tax:

The state of Colorado does not have a separate withholding form and will follow the same withholding set up on the federal W-4. To add or cancel an additional amount for Colorado, please click the link: Additional CO State Tax Withholding Information

If you do not live in Colorado and should be exempt from paying Colorado taxes, please click the link: Colorado Tax Exemption